

Message Text

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NODIS

CHEROKEE

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QUOTE

S E C R E T CAIRO 6775

NODIS/CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR ME IS EG

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR DINITZ

REF: STATE 159920

1. IF I UNDERSTAND IDEA OUTLINED IN PARA 2 REFTEL
CORRECTLY, THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE WESTERN
ENTRANCES OF THE PASSES WOULD BE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE
AND THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE SOMEWHERE ON THE EASTERN
SLOPES OF THE PASSES. THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS
AT THE EASTERN END OF THE PASSES WOULD BE BEHIND RATHER THAN

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IN FRONT OF THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE. THE UNEF

BUFFER ZONE, I ASSUME, WOULD BE BETWEEN THE EGYPTIAN FORWARD LINE WEST OF THE WESTERN ENDS OF THE PASSES AND THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE ON THE EASTERN SLOPES OF THE PASSES. THE ISRAELI MONITORING STATION AT JABAL UMM KHUSHAIB WOULD REMAIN WITH A COMPARABLE ONE TO BE BUILT BY THE EGYPTIANS SOMEWHERE IN THE BUFFER ZONE.

2. SEVERAL QUESTIONS ARISE WHICH WILL HAVE A BEARING ON EGYPTIAN REPLY:

A. FIRST IS THE MATTER OF JUST WHERE ON THE EASTERN SLOPES OF THE PASSES THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE WOULD BE. IF THEY STILL OCCUPY ALMOST HALF OF THE PASSES, SADAT WILL FIND THE IDEA HARD TO ACCEPT. IF IT IS JUST A FEW KILOMETERS, MAYBE HE COULD STOMACH IT. RELATED TO THIS SAME ISSUE IS THE MATTER OF DIVERGENT DEFINITIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES THE PASSES. THE EGYPTIANS CONTEND, AS GAMASY AGAIN POINTED OUT TO CODEL BONKER LAST EVENING, THAT THE GIDI PASS AREA IS SEVEN KILOMETERS IN LENGTH AND MITLA 21 KILOMETERS. THE ISRAELIS, HE NOTED, SEEM TO HAVE A MUCH MORE EXTENSIVE DEFINITION OF THE PASSES. THIS IS NOT MERELY A SEMANTIC POINT, BUT ONE WITH VERY PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS IN TERMS OF WHERE ARE THE ENDS (OR ENTRANCES) TO THE PASSES AND WHAT IS MEANT BY EASTERN OR WESTERN SLOPES.

B. SECOND, IN CONNECTION WITH THE EGYPTIAN MONITORING STATION TO BE BUILT, THE BUFFER ZONE IS A RATHER RESTRICTED AREA FOR SUCH AN INSTALLATION. I COULD BE WRONG, BUT I SUSPECT THAT AN INSTALLATION POSITIONED IN THE BUFFER ZONE WOULD NOT BE OF MUCH BENEFIT TO THE EGYPTIANS IN MONITORING ISRAELI ACTIVITIES. IF THIS IS CORRECT, THE EGYPTIANS WILL PICK IT UP AT ONCE. THEY HAVE SEVERAL TIMES TALKED OF JABAL YALIQ AS THE BEST SITE FOR AN INSTALLATION DIRECTED AT MONITORING ISRAELI ACTIVITIES, BUT THIS LOCATION WOULD PRESUMABLY BE OURSIDE THE BUFFER ZONE.

C. THIRD, UNLESS I AM READING THE IDEA WRONG, WHEREAS THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE

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WESTERN ENTRANCES WOULD ADD TO THE EXISTING ISRAELI CAPABILITY TO MONITOR AND DETER THE EGYPTIANS, THE AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE WESTERN ENTRANCES WOULD BE SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE AND THEIR MAIN LINE. THE EGYPTIANS WANT AMERICANS TO REPLACE THE ISRAELIS IN THE MONITORING STATION; THEY WOULD FIND IT HARD TO ACCEPT AN AMERICAN MILITARY STATION IN ADDITION TO THE ISRAELI FACILITY. CONCEIVABLY, SYMMETRY COULD

BE COSMETICALLY IMPROVED BY PUTTING THE TWO AMERICAN MILITARY POSTS AT THE EASTERN END OF THE PASSES IN FRONT RPT IN FRONT OF THE ISRAELI FORWARD LINE. THE CONCEPT MIGHT ALSO FIND MORE APPEAL TO THE EGYPTIANS IF EGYPTIAN POSTS WOULD BE PERMITTED IN THE WESTERN ENDS OF THE PASSES WITH AN AMERICAN MILITARY POST AHEAD OF THEM. BUT THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE ISRAELI STATION WILL REMAIN A STUMBLING BLOK.

D. FOURTH, I HAVE SENSED A GROWING HEAD OF STEAM AGAINST THE CONCEPT OF A NARROW ACCESS CORRIDOR WITH PARALLEL ROADS RUNNING ALMOST CHEEK BY JOWL. GAMASY STRONGLY OBJECTS TO IT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE TWO SIDES ARE TOO CLOSE TOGETHER AND YESTERDAY REITERATED THIS TO CODEL BONKER. SADAT, APPARENTLY ECHOING GAMASY'S VIEW, HAS ALSO RECENTLY SAID THIS IDEA IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. CONCEIVABLY A SOMEWHAT WIDER CORRIDOR IN WHICH THE EGYPTIANS AND ISRAELI FORCES WERE FARTHER APART WOULD HELP, BUT THE EXISTING ROAD NETWORK HARDLY PERMITS THIS.

3. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WHILE I BELIEVE SADAT VERY MUCH WANTS AN AGREEMENT, I THINK THE ODDS ARE NO BETTER THAN FIFTY-FIFTY OR PERHAPS LESS THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT THIS IDEA IN THE FORM IN WHICH I UNDERSTAND IT. GAMASY CAN BE EXPECTED TO OPPOSE IT. HE WILL ARGUE THAT SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD FURTHER ADVANTAGE THE ISRAELIS BY MAKING IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE EGYPTIANS TO EXERCISE THEIR MILITARY OPTION. THE LATTER MAY BE THEORETICAL BUT, FROM A COSMETIC POINT OF VIEW, SADAT MUST FOR POLITICAL REASONS AT LEAST APPEAR TO BE RETAINING IT.

4. SADAT HAS NOW REPEATEDLY PUBLICLY PROCLAIMED
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EGYPT'S MINIMAL REQUIREMENT TO BE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PASSES AND THE RETURN OF THE OILFIELDS. AGAINST THE ADVICE OF HIS PEOPLE, HE ACCEPTED LESS IN THE FIRST DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT THAN THEY THOUGHT HE COULD GET. HE DID SO IN ORDER TO BEGIN THE PEACE PROCESS. THERE IS NEGOTIABILITY IN THE EGYPTIAN DEMANDS, BUT SADAT IS DEEPLY CONSCIOUS OF HIS POLITICAL VULNERABILITY IF HE ACCEPTS LESS THAN THE EGYPTIAN PUBLIC HAS COME TO EXPECT. FAHMY MAY FIND THE IDEA SOMEWHAT MORE ATTRACTIVE, BUT I DOUBT THAT HE CAN PREVAIL ON A MILITARY ISSUE OF THIS SORT. THE DECISION WILL HAVE TO BE MADE BY PRESIDENT SADAT IN LIGHT OF HIS READING OF THE POLITICAL VIABILITY OF THE IDEA.

5. IF WE CHOOSE TO PRESENT THE IDEA, I THINK WE

SHOULD DO SO AS THE LATEST ISRAELI CONCEPT AND AVOID SPECIFIC ENDORSEMENT. TO ENDORSE, IT, KNOWING WHAT WE DO ABOUT SADAT'S VIEWS, WOULD SHAKE SADAT'S FAITH IN PRESIDENT FORD'S RELIABILITY. ANY SUCH DEVELOPMENT COULD BE HARMFUL TO OUR FURTHER EFFORTS.

6. I WILL ADVISE FAHMY ALONG THE LINES SET FORTH PARAS 5 AND 6 REFTEL. I PLAN TO FLY TO WASHINGTON ON TUESDAY, JULY 15. WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF NEA/EGY COULD BE INSTRUCTED SEND NECESSARY TRAVEL DATA.

7. N.B. I HAVE JUST BEEN SENT A COPY OF A STORY FILED LAST NIGHT BY KINGSBURY SMITH WHO, ALONG WITH WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST, JR., ALSO SAW SADAT YESTERDAY IN ALEXANDRIA. STORY SUGGESTS SADAT CONFIRMED NEW AGREEMENT IS ABOUT TO BE CONCLUDED, ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT YET BEEN FORMALLY ADVISED BY SU. NOTHING OF THIS SORT CAME UP IN CODEL BONKER'S AND MY MEETING WITH SADAT YESTERDAY. HOWEVER, BBC STORY OF YESTERDAY HAS AROUSED GREAT EXCITEMENT LOCALLY AND BELIEF A NEW AGREEMENT IS IMMINENT. THE PROBLEM, AS I SEE IT, IS THAT THE BBC STORY IS NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE DETAILS SET FORTH REFTEL. EGYPTIANS MAY, THEREFORE, BE IN FOR SOME DISAPPOINTMENT WHEN THEY HEAR ISRAELI PROPOSAL. EILTS
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